

**DRAFT FITCHBURG PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Caron, Chair
Mike DiPietro
Paul Fontaine, Jr.
Mike Hurley
Kristin Sweeney
Andrew Van Hazinga

PLANNING OFFICE: Mike O'Hara

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Community Room, Fitchburg Fire Headquarters, 33 North St.

Board Reorganization

Motion made & seconded to designate Ms. Caron as Chair for the coming year.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion made & seconded to designate Mr. Fontaine as Vice-Chair for the coming year.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the December 15th meeting was approved with one correction.

ANR plans

Bouchard, 347 & 349 Lunenburg St.

Two existing buildings on one parcel, 347 & 349 Lunenburg (Kia dealership). There is a buyer for one of the buildings so need to split the parcel in two. An access easement is proposed between the two buildings. The Board signed the plan.

MINOR SITE PLAN REVIEW

Dufour, 688 John Fitch Hwy., "Auto Shower" - two additional bays (rev. plan)

Revised plan not yet submitted. Board expressed concern that the fence to screen abutter on left side still not constructed. Agreed to send letter to car wash – submit revised plan by next meeting or else.

Superior Car Rental, 265 Summer St. - re-use of Midas Muffler (rear)

Deferred to next month since applicant not present.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Council petitions: - Fitchburg Municipal Airport (FIT) Avigation easement

Item taken out of order in the interest of time, there is also a hearing on this item later tonight at City Council. Scott Ellis, Airport Manager and Matt Caron, Gale Assocs. present.

An avigation easement is needed on several parcels in the approach zone of the runways. Mandated by FAA. Purpose: To prevent obstructions in the plane of 20:1 approach zones. Vegetation encroaching those planes will be removed by airport's contractor, per forest cutting plan. Conservation Commission has issued Order of Conditions for cutting plan. FIT is compensating for the appraised value of the airspace. Project is funded 95% by FAA. FIT will not replant trees, but property owners may.

Motion made & seconded to recommend in favor of amendment. Vote 6-0 in favor.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Special Permit - Pappas, 306 Summer St. mixed-use (commercial & apt.) (postponed from 12/15/15)

Applicant had sent an email earlier that day requesting that the application be withdrawn.

Motion made & seconded to accept request that application be withdrawn. Vote 6-0 in favor.

Special Permit - Beacon Central, LLC (Jeffrey Benoit), 17 Sheridan St., re-establish 3-family dwelling
Mr. Benoit presented site plan & floor plans. It was a 3-family prior, he's started doing extensive work on it to get it up to code. Driveway has been repaired. There is adequate parking on the lot, the lot is one of the larger ones in the area - 12,255 sq. ft.

Public comment:

Mark Wheeler, 44 Sheridan St. is concerned that "Residence C" on hearing notice means "Residential & Commercial." He was informed that it doesn't.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Motion made & seconded to Approve the Special Permit for a three-family dwelling, provided a parking plan is submitted showing the delineated parking spaces.

Vote 6-0 in favor.

Special Permit (relief from driveway dimensional requirements) & Site Plan Review (continued) - South Coast Development, LLC, 487 Princeton Rd., convenience store, fast food restaurant w/ gas pumps
Hearing on Site Plan Review re-opened. This is also a hearing on a Special Permit to increase width of site driveways from 36 to 40 feet.

Noted that last week's ZBA re-hearing on their special permit & variance application had to be postponed for lack of quorum, rescheduled to Feb. 13th.

Anthony Cleaves, Whitman & Bingham reviewed revisions to plan since last meeting: fence on property line to screen abutters, more landscaping. He explained traffic circulation through site.

Public comment:

Thanh Nguyen, 459 Princeton Rd. - only three arborvitae provided for screening his property?

Scott Wilbur, 455 Princeton Rd. - Wants bushes, not a fence along his property line.

Anthony: Fence would be 2 feet higher than stormwater basin at the street, and will follow grade of property.

Maintenance of S/W basin discussed. There is an S/W O&M plan which lists periodic maintenance & frequency. Suggested - O&M plan should be condition of approval.

Domenic Brown, South Coast Development – they have about ten other such stores/gas and do regular maintenance.

Mr. Nguyen: Could site be turned around & oriented the other way? D/W only on Authority Dr.?

Also is concerned about USTs close to his property. Possible to move tanks?

Anthony: Not really, in order to make site work. Tanks will be installed acc. to fire prevention codes and tested. Diesel and gas will be sold.

Diana Wilbur, 455 Princeton Rd. - Area was considered wetlands when their house was built.

Yes, but Conservation Commission has recently determined that it not an area subject to their jurisdiction under the Wetlands Act.

Re: Driveway widening - - Several of their other locations have had problems w/ customers driving over grass & sod at corners & have widened them. Driveways will still be one lane each way.

Anthony: Arborvitae will be 8-10 feet tall when planted, approx. 12' o.c. When mature will be 50-60 feet.

Phil Chura: 269 Fifth Mass. Tpk. is concerned w/ fuel smell if gas is spilled.

Mr. Fontaine: Fuel Dispensing Station is handled by the ZBA.

Discussion about revising fence: Fence along property line adjacent to Churas or a 4-foot high fence @ edge of parking area adjacent to condos ?

Mr. Chura: With a 4 foot high fence headlights would still shine into his yard. He prefers fence on property line. Discussion about where to have fence & how high. What do neighbors want?

Agreed: Keep on property line as shown on latest plan.

Q: Hours of operation? 5:00 a.m. to midnight. Not looking for 24 hours now.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Hurley) to Approve:

- Site Plan as last revised 12/29/15.
- Special Permit to widen driveway to 4 feet.

Conditions to follow.

Vote: 6-0 in favor

Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment - West Fitchburg Overlay District

Hearing opened. Chantell Fleck, MRPC present.

Ms. Caron explained purposed of proposed Ordinance & Map amendment. Copies were available for public.

Public Comment: Amanda Koeck, Sanborn St. – Cautioned about unintended consequences, is concerned about very large retail being allowed in Overlay District. Doesn't want to see a Walmart in West Fitchburg. Per proposed amendment Retail >10,000 sq. ft. requires a Special Permit (Planning Board) so there would be opportunity to review/deny.

Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director – Good to review what an overlay district is and isn't. It retains the underlying Zoning district and is an additional option for property owners and developers for re-development.

Motion made & seconded to close hearing. Vote in favor.

Motion made (Mr. Fontaine) & seconded (Mr. Van Hazinga) to recommend in favor of proposed amendment.

Vote: 6-0 in favor

OTHER BUSINESS

Community Health Connections - Special Permit #2010-6

John DeMalia, CEO of CHC and Pierre Primeau present. John submitted a letter dated 1/19/16 outlining reasons why they feel all but two Special Permit conditions had been complied with, and a request to waive the remaining two conditions, or, in the alternative, grant an extension of time. CHC's fundraising efforts have fallen short of their goal. Other factors have contributed to less revenue. Board not in favor of eliminating the two conditions concerning improvements to Drepanos Drive and its intersections w/ Burbank St. & Nichols St.

Motion made & seconded & seconded to grant a three (3) year extension of time (to January 15, 2019 to complete conditions 3 and 7 in Special Permit #2010-6, subject to an annual progress review.

Vote 6-0 in favor.

Krikorian, concept plan, Harper Furniture, 10 Main St.

Present were Bill Krikorian, Mark Dooling, architect, Matt Fournier, EC&D Construction.

Krikorian has a P&S w/ Micron Products for 10 Main St. (the former Harper Furniture), the vacant lot next door (former Caron's Flea Market), and 15 Summer St. (the former Summer St. Fire Station).

They presented a concept plan for converting the Harper Furniture building into residential units on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th floor and commercial space on the ground floor. The Summer St. fire station would be demolished and a parking deck built on that portion and the empty lot in between.

They're planning on 77 units, with a mix of 1-, 2- and 3-BRs. Parking spaces: 60 (30 on parking deck & 30 on lot behind it). They will look into leasing more spaces in the MART or municipal garages. Will need parking relief for the required residential spaces. Providing at least one space per unit would make some of the Board more comfortable. Also, residential tenants could possibly secure their own sep. parking space, for a 2nd car. Perhaps there could be shared parking overnight on Micron's lot, after employees have left for the day. Discussion on the minimum length of a parking lease agreement that would satisfy the Board.

A term of five years was suggested.

Since site is in the Municipal Parking Overlay District, no off-street spaces required for the commercial uses. First floor has 20,000 sq. ft. Proposed uses undetermined at this time.

Possible rents for 1-BR unit: \$950-1,050.

Suggested: Look into historic tax credits. Building may be eligible for State/National Register.

Suggested: Rooftop garden, make sure there is tenant storage in building.

Mr. Van Hazinga: Board will be a willing partner with the developer and contractor on this project.

Royal Fuel, 880 Water St. - conversion of garage bays to retail.

Revised plan was submitted to follow-up on conditions of last month's Site Plan Approval. Applicant not present, so item deferred.

CVS, Main St. & North St.

Brian Murphy, the general contractor for the CVS project was there for a minor plan revision - 7 of the 8 lighted bollards at the front entrance to the store has been hit & damaged by vehicles. Each replacement bollard costs \$1,200. He wants to relocate bollards closer to building and have them sturdier, and not lighted. He will send a detail and plan showing their new proposed location.

Motion made & seconded & seconded to approve this minor modification. Vote in favor.

Noted: Dumpster enclosure is cedar stockade fence, instead of the usual white vinyl. Check conditions on site plan approval.

Mt. Elam Peak subdivision- status & bond reduction

Jim Pappas is requesting reduction in amount of performance guarantee held on Turkey Hill & Goodfellow Dr. Streets are complete, bounds are in, waiting on Pappas' engineer to submit as-built & layout plans.

Motion made & seconded to reduce the amount held in the Performance Guarantee to whatever DPW-Engineering Division is comfortable with. Vote in favor.

Parker Hill Ests. subdivision - status & bond reduction

Ken Matson requesting reduction on amount of performance guarantee held on Downy Circle, which is complete.

Motion made & seconded to reduce the amount held in the Performance Guarantee to whatever DPW-Engineering Division is comfortable with. Vote in favor.

South & Electric - "Safe Routes to School" improvements

Deferred to next meeting when more time to look at plans.

323 Princeton Rd.

Condition of this Special Permit had required Planning Board review of change in tenants.

Board briefly reviewed proposal of Twin City Fuel to use one of the units for a business office, one employee, a desk and a computer. No objections.

City Council petitions:

- Special Permit - reuse as residential/business, 196-198 Water St.

Board voted to recommend not approving this special permit. Proposed plan would allow vehicles to back out into a busy street, Water St., which would amount to a traffic hazard. Perhaps there was an alternative means of parking and access via an abutting lot.

- Special Permit - reuse as 3-family, 76-78 Nashua St.

Board voted to recommend in favor of this application provided adequate parking was provided and shown on a parking plan.

Meeting adjourned: 10:03 p.m.

Next meeting: 1/28/16 (*CDBG public hearing only*)